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South Dakota Art Museum Newsletters and Publications

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South Dakota Memorial Art Center News, Summer 1973

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Grace French part of Black Hills landscape painting tradition

The following is the third of a series of profiles of South Dakota artists, written by Pamela Kachel, and gleaned from the Memorial Art Center's comprehensive Survey of the Visual Arts in South Dakota. The survey is being funded by a grant from the South Dakota Arts Council through the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Black Hills area of South Dakota has a long history of landscape

painting. During the nineteenth century many of America's leading landscapists traveled through that part of the state looking for new scenery and fresh inspiration. Worthington Whittredge, Thomas Moran, Alfred J. Miller, Albert Bierstadt, Sanford R. Gifford, and John F. Kennett were a few; none stayed. They returned to their New York studios to paint what they had sketched during their travels.

Grace French (1858-1942) is an exception. Although Miss French's work is not known by historians, her work is of quality and she remains a key figure in the development of landscape painting in the Black Hills.

Grace Ann French was born in New Hampshire. After three years at the Lowell School of Industrial Design
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*October Blue and Gold by
Grace French (1858-1942)*



Women's Federation meets at Art Center

The South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs held its 74th annual state convention in Brookings April 26 and 27, with more than 200 delegates attending. Sessions were held in the Memorial Art Center, with luncheons and banquets at the Pugsley Union.

Featured speakers and guests were Mrs. Robert Lusk, president of the Memorial Art Center Board of Trustees, Robert Karolevitz, Mission Hill author and biographer of Harvey Dunn, and Mrs. Don Shide of Larimore, N. D., treasurer of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Mrs. Everett Eneboe of Canton, president of the South Dakota Federation, presided.

It was the Federation which originally conceived the idea for a state art center in South Dakota and selected the campus of South Dakota State University for its location. The Federation contributed approximately \$50,000 towards the Center's building fund, and placed its collection of art in the Center for public benefit. The collection contains work by such distinguished American artists as Thomas Hart Benton, George Biddle, Oscar Howe, Joe Jones, Rockwell Kent, Reginald Marsh, and Birger Sandzen.

Art Center sets exhibit schedule

South Dakota Biennial I

June 17-August 26, 1973

N. C. Wyeth: Paintings

September 2-October 28, 1973

American Society of Landscape Architects Awards

November 4-December 2, 1973

Florence Kawa: Paintings

Charles Evans: Ceramic Sculpture

December 9, 1973-January 13, 1974

Eskimo Art

January 20-February 17, 1974

The American Artist and Water Reclamation

February 24-March 24, 1974

Fine Arts Festival Week Exhibit

March 31-April 7, 1974

Diaghilev and Russian Stage Designers

April 14-May 12, 1974

South Dakota College Art Student Exhibition

May 19-June 16, 1974

Northwestern Biennial II

June 23-August 25, 1974

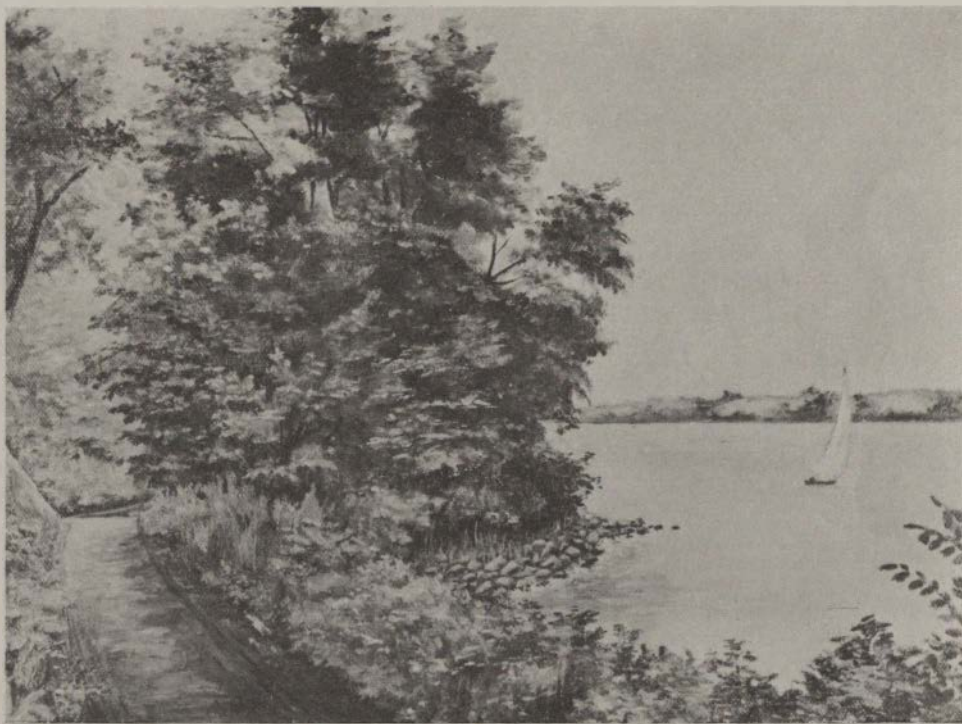
Art Center survey gains support

The National Endowment for the Arts, through the South Dakota Arts Council, has granted \$4,575 in support of the Memorial Art Center's Survey of the Visual Arts in South Dakota program for fiscal year 1973-74. The grant will be matched by the Center. The grant is to be used to assemble and present an exhibition reflecting 150 years of South Dakota art at the Center during September and October of 1974.

The Endowment and Council granted \$5,000 to the Center—also on a matching funds basis—during 1972-73 to conduct a survey of artists who have worked in South Dakota during the 19th and 20th centuries. The results of this survey will appear in the "Index of South Dakota Artists" due to be published in January of 1974. Approximately 500 artists' biographies will be featured in the "Index."

At its 74th annual convention in Brookings in April the South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs voted to underwrite publication of an illustrated catalog of the survey exhibition. Center staff members involved with the catalog are designing it to function not only as an exhibition catalog, but to serve as a text on South Dakota art as well for secondary and college-level study.

The South Dakota Bicentennial Commission has granted \$5,000 for the preparation of a circulating exhibit based upon the premiere survey exhibition at the Center to be shown in communities throughout the state during November and December of 1974 and 1975-76. Thus far the circulating exhibit is scheduled for showing in Aberdeen, Canton, Deadwood, Huron, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, St. Francis, and Yankton.



Chataqua Park Road by Nellie Voss (1871-1963)

South Dakota Biennial Exhibition includes \$1,250 for awards

A statewide exhibition of painting, sculpture, drawing, and printmaking will be held at the Center this summer from June 17 through Aug. 26. The Biennial has been selected by Dr. Fredrick Bunce, newly appointed head of the Art Department at South Dakota State University, Raymond Shermoe, director of the Civic Fine Arts Center in Sioux Falls, and Joseph Stuart, director of the Memorial Art Center.

A total of \$1,250 is available for awards in the exhibition, and \$1,000 is available for purchases from the exhibition for the Center's collections. Two awards, one for \$150 and one for \$100, will be given by the

Brookings Fine Arts Club through the Brookings Summer Arts Festival.

The purpose of the Biennial, according to Stuart, is to focus attention upon the creative work of artists in the state, and to encourage these people through recognition and financial support.

The public is invited to attend the opening of the exhibition at the Center on Sunday, June 17, from 1 to 5 p.m. Awards, including a Most Popular Award based upon visitor voting, will be presented at the Center on Sunday, July 15, at 3 p.m., which is on the weekend of the Brookings Summer Arts Festival.

Soon-to-be-published "Index of South Dakota Artists" will include 500 listings

The fruits of a year-long research project will be harvested next winter with the publication of "The Index of South Dakota Artists." This book will list and briefly describe some 500 state artists, both living and dead, who have either worked in this state, or who came here originally.

The book results from the work of Pam Kachel, research assistant at the South Dakota Memorial Art Center, whose study was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, under the auspices of the South Dakota Arts Council.

The "Index," which will be printed in a loose-leaf format to provide for future updating of entries, will be a straight biographical listing of the 500 artists. The artists include those who were born in the state, those who have lived here, and those who may have spent only brief periods here to do painting. The book will cover both deceased and practicing artists, both professional and amateur.

Miss Kachel has broken new research ground in her survey, finding information not previously known and pulling it together into one place. "Getting a handle" on all this information proved a major challenge. Miss Kachel spent about half her time last fall in travel around the state. She spent a major segment of time at the State Historical Society in Pierre. Looking at the portraits in Pierre of South Dakota governors provided her with many leads for state artists.

Another major source was Dr. James Gillihan, director of the W. H. Over Museum at the University of South Dakota. Miss Kachel also credits the South Dakota Arts Council list of artists and various local art clubs for their help.

Still another leading source of information was the South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs, which has a large art collection with "some very good painters."

Miss Kachel's research has found that many painters of note spent some time in the state, especially during the pre-statehood days when painters and other artists were traveling in the West, drawn by the lure of Indian

confrontations. "There are numerous portraits of Sitting Bull that come out of this era," she said.

Some of the major artists who were in South Dakota include J. J. Audubon, Charles Remington, George Catlin and Karl Bodmer.

Miss Kachel noted the high quality of painting in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In this period right after statehood, a number of good artists settled in the state and practiced their profession, she said.

The Black Hills produced a number of good artists, like Grace French and Fanny Chase Knockenmuss, whose work is included in Art Center holdings. Miss Kachel said Black Hills residents can speak with justification of their art tradition.

The bulk of South Dakota art has been landscape, she noted, and the Black Hills and Missouri River have been two favorite art subjects.

After an early period of art activity, this state, like most of the rest of the nation, experienced a low point in the 1930s and 1940s. Today, Miss Kachel found, there are few professional artists in the state, other than those working in college and university settings.

Miss Kachel makes no claim that her "Index" includes all the artists it should. For example, there are approximately one dozen painters

for whom she was able to find only names, but no biographical data. She hopes that once the "Index" is published and people read it, some of this missing data as well as material about other artists will be forthcoming.

Miss Kachel, who is from Madison, holds her B.A. from Dakota State and her M.A. in art history from the University of Iowa.

The files of the 500 artists will remain at the Art Center and be available to persons interested in using them. Miss Kachel also has developed a slide collection and catalog for the art now held in South Dakota. This material also will be available at the Center for further use.

Six Jones works gift to Center

Recently acquired by the South Dakota Memorial Art Center for its collection of art work by South Dakota artists were six paintings by Miss L. Lova Jones. These paintings were the gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls, from their collection of Lova Jones' paintings. Mr. Jones, a nephew of the late Lova Jones, has also been benevolent in supplying extensive biographical materials on the artist.

Lova Jones was born in 1874 near Postville, Iowa. When the artist was a child her family homesteaded northeast of Sioux Falls. Except for the years she spent studying art at the Chicago Art Institute and painting in New York and Long Beach, Calif., Miss Jones remained a resident of South Dakota until her death at Brandon in 1942.

"Civilisation" film series scheduled

The acclaimed 13-film series, "Civilisation," written and narrated by Sir Kenneth Clark, will be presented at the Center's Alumni Auditorium this fall, weekly beginning Wednesday, Sept. 5, in color. The series comes on loan from Augustana College in Sioux Falls.

Types of Annual Membership

STUDENT MEMBER	\$ 1
ACTIVE MEMBER	10
PARTICIPATING MEMBER	25
CONTRIBUTING MEMBER	50
PATRON MEMBER	100
SUPPORTING MEMBER	250
SUSTAINING MEMBER	500
SPONSORING MEMBER	750
LIFE MEMBER	1,000

Gifts and memorials are welcome.

Charter Membership Application

for the

South Dakota Memorial Art Center

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____ Date _____

General Membership Privileges

Quarterly calendar of events and Members Newsletter

Reduced fees for art classes and workshops

Reduced subscription rates to leading art magazines

Rental and purchase of original works of art through the Sales and Rental Gallery

Discounts on most items sold in the Art Center Shop

Participation in the Art Center's Tour Program

Discounts on Art Center publications

Invitations to Member's previews of major exhibitions

Recent Center acquisitions include work by six artists

Grace French (U. S., 1858-1942). *The Artist's Mother*, date unknown. Oil painting on panel, 11½"x15½". Gift of Mrs. Etta Anderson, Rapid City.

Grace French. *Still Life with Eggs*, painting on panel, 11½"x15½". Gift of Mrs. Etta Anderson, Rapid City.

Marsden Hartley (U. S., 1877-1943). *Pears and Apples*, 1923. Lithograph. 15½"x21½". Gift of the Brookings Fine Art Club.

Grant Reynard (U. S., 1887-1968). *The Milkman*, date unknown. Oil painting on canvas, 20"x24". Gift of Mr. Ray H. Smith, Frederick, Maryland.

Nellie Voss (U. S., 1871-1963). *Chautauqua Park Road*, 1914. Oil painting on canvas, 12"x16". Gift of Miss Ramona Voss, Milbank.

L. Lova Jones (U. S., 1874-1942). Untitled, c. 1893-1904. Oil painting on panel, 14"x9½". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls.

L. Lova Jones. *California Snow Storm*, date unknown. Oil painting on canvas, 12½"x18". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls.

L. Lova Jones. *Ant Hill*, c. 1912-17. Oil painting on canvas, 12"x17". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls.

L. Lova Jones. *Falling Snow*, before 1912. Oil painting on canvas. 20¼"x12". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls.

L. Lova Jones. Untitled, date unknown. Oil painting on panel, 22¾"x16". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls.

L. Lova Jones. Untitled, before 1917. Oil painting on canvas. 30"x24". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Jones, Sioux Falls.

Stephen Francis Poleskie (U. S., born 1938). *Narabsky*, 1973. Serigraph (artist's proof), 26"x20". Purchase.

FRENCH (from page 1)

she received her degree in 1881. Grace continued her studies in painting and drawing at the School of the Boston Museum of Art. In 1885 the artist moved with her family to a homesite on Elk Creek, near Rapid City. After holding a teaching position in the Art Department of Black Hills College in Hot Springs for five years until the school closed in 1893, Grace and her sister, Abbie, became interested in china painting. They studied this craft in Omaha; later Grace went to Chicago for further study. In 1900 the two French sisters opened a studio equipped with a china painting studio and kiln, and a painting and drawing studio.

From 1900 until her death in 1942 Grace French's reputation and influence grew. Her paintings of well known Black Hills spots such as "The Old Crown Bridge" and "Rapid Creek" (both at the Minnilusa

Voss painting given to Center

A small oil landscape painting entitled "Chautauqua Park Road" has been given to the South Dakota Memorial Art Center by Miss Ramona Voss, Milbank. The scene which depicts the park road on Big Stone Lake near Big Stone City was painted by Miss Voss' mother, Nellie Cleveland Voss, in 1914.

Nellie Voss 1871-1963 studied art at the Eden Park Academy in Cincinnati. She returned to South Dakota, taught rural school for a time in the Milbank area, married, and continued to paint the landscape near her home until her death.

Pioneer Museum) appealed to the local populace and sold well. Even though the two sisters were considered a bit eccentric, many students were attracted to the French studio where they learned to paint first by copying reproductions of the old masters and then by studying from nature. Some of Grace's students remain today, painting the Hills scenery.

The South Dakota Memorial Art Center has three of Grace French's paintings in its collection. Reproduced here is "October Blue and Gold," an oil painting typical of the color and brush stroke Miss French employed to give an airy, light-filled quality to her landscapes. The Black Hills artist's paintings may also be found at the Minnilusa Pioneer Museum, Rapid City, and in the Art Department of Black Hills State College, Spearfish.

Biographical information courtesy of Mrs. Etta Anderson, Rapid City, S. D.

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